Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta an Atlantaigh

Atlantic Technological University

Report of External Peer Review Group for the Programmatic Review of:

Programme	Code	Level	ECTS	Duration	Award Type	Embedded/Parent Awards
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Public Health Nutrition	GA_SPHNG_H08	8	240	4	Major	Bachelor of Science in Public Health Nutrition Higher Certificate in Science in Nutrition
Bachelor of Science in Public Health Nutrition (Exit)	GA_SPHNG_B07	7	180	3	Exit	Exit Award: Higher Certificate in Science in Nutrition
Higher Certificate in Science in Nutrition (Exit)	GA_SPHNG_C06	6	120	2	Exit	Parent Award: Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Public Health Nutrition
Master of Science in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition	GA_SSENG_V09	9	90	18 months	Major	Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition Certificate in Science in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition
Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition (Exit)	GA_SSENG_O09	9	60	1	Exit	Parent Award: Master of Science in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition
Certificate in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition (Exit)	GA_SSENG_E09	9	30	1 semester	Exit	Parent Award: Master of Science in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition
Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Sport and Exercise Science	GA_SSESG_H08	8	240	4	Major	Exit Awards: Bachelor of Science in Sport and Exercise Science, Higher Certificate in Science in Physiology and Health Science
Bachelor of Science in Sport and Exercise Science (Exit)	GA_SSESG_B07	7	180	3	Exit	Parent Award: Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Sport and Exercise Science
Higher Certificate in Science in Physiology and Health Science (Exit)	GA_SSESG_C07	6	120	2	Exit	Parent Award: Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Sport and Exercise Science

Certificate in Food Entrepreneurship and Innovation	GA_SFIEG_S09	9	30	18 weeks	SPA	N/A

Date of Panel: Thursday, May 5th, 2022

External Peer Review Group:

Panel	
Chairperson	Dr Edel Healy, Head of School of Health & Science, Dundalk IT.
Iot/Uni Representative	Dr Paula Rankin, Head of Department of Science & Health, SETU Dr Trish Heavey, Lecturer & Course Coordinator, Nutrition and Health Science, TUS
Iot/Uni Representative	Dr Siobhán O'Connor, Associate Professor, School of Health & Human Performance, DCU Dr Aoife Lane, Head of Department Sport & Health Sciences, TUS
Graduate Representative	Mr. Ayrton Walshe MRes Candidate in Sports Science
Graduate Representative	Ms. Tansy Ryan, Research
Secretary	Ms. Carmel Brennan, Assistant Registrar (Quality) (Secretary)

1   Introduction to Programmatic Review

Programmatic review involves a periodic, formal, systematic, comprehensive and reflective review and evaluation of each programme and award offered by the Institute for purposes of programme development, quality enhancement and revalidation. It is an important means of ensuring and assuring, *inter alia*:
- that required academic standards are being attained;
- that programmes and awards remain relevant and viable;
- that student needs, including academic and labour-market needs, are addressed;
- that the quality of programmes and awards is enhanced and improved;
- public confidence in the quality of GMIT's programmes and awards.

GMIT last conducted Programmatic Review in 2014 and was due to undertake it again in 2019/20. The process was delayed until this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The objective of a programmatic review is to review the development of the programme over the previous five to seven years, with particular emphasis on the achievement and improvement of educational quality.

The focus is principally on the evaluation of quality and the flexibility of the programmes' responses to changing needs in light of the validation criteria and relevant awards standards. In particular, a programmatic review seeks to confirm that the promise evidenced at the original validation (or since the last programmatic review) in terms of academic quality, relevance and viability has been realised, and that the programme is adapting appropriately to evolving circumstances.

The specific objectives of a programmatic review are, *inter alia,* to:
- analyse and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme, including details of student numbers, retention rates and success rates;
- review the development of the programme in the context of the requirements of employers, industry, professional bodies, the Irish economy and international developments;
- evaluate the response of the programme to regional and societal requirements and to educational developments;
- evaluate the feedback mechanisms for students and the processes for acting on this feedback;
- review the feedback from students relating to the student experience of the programme
- evaluate stakeholder engagement including links and collaboration with industry, business and the wider community;
- review feedback from employers and graduates;
- evaluate the physical facilities and resources provided for the provision of the programme;
- review any research activities in the field of learning in the disciplinary areas and their impact on teaching and learning;
- consider likely future developments in the disciplinary areas;
- make proposals in relation to updating programmes and modules, and to discontinuing programmes or parts of programmes.

Academic Council identified three themes to be specifically addressed during the 2021/22 Programmatic Review namely:
- Assessment – ensure the assessment strategy and methodology are appropriate and aligned with learning outcomes and that students are not over-assessed.
- Employability – ensure that students develop career skills necessary to prepare them for employment. Embed professional practice (e.g., work placement, work-based projects in the programme, ensuring that there is an appropriate plan for their management)
- Sustainability – review modules and learning outcomes to ensure that the sustainability agenda is addressed, debated, and applied within student learning and assessment, as appropriate.

2   Methodology

The programmatic review process involves a self-evaluation by each programme board followed by an external peer review. The Programme board engaged in a process of the collection and review of data related to the programme and feedback from stakeholders including students, graduates and industry. The overall programme and each individual module have been reviewed and recommendation(s) for updates made as required.

The External Peer Review Group (EPRG) received a copy of the Self Evaluation Review documentation and the programme documentation including any proposed changes. The EPRG then met the Programme Board (Appendix A) to discuss the programme and the documentation provided, as well meeting a representative sample of students (Appendix B). The schedule for the review visit is contained in Appendix C.

3   Background to Programme(s) Being Reviewed

Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Public Health Nutrition
Bachelor of Science in Public Health Nutrition (Exit)
Higher Certificate in Science in Nutrition (Exit)

Public Health Nutrition focuses on the promotion of good health through nutrition and the primary prevention of nutrition-related illness in the population. The programme is designed to provide students with a sound grounding in the scientific method in the context of nutrition and public health. Within the past decade there has been a marked growth in the career opportunities available for public health nutritionists (e.g., community nutrition, health promotion programmes, teaching in further higher education, food safety and clinical roles (dietetic assistants) in hospitals and medical organisations). Coupled with such growth has also been an increased need for appropriately qualified and accredited individuals to undertake such roles. The Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Public Health Nutrition therefore seeks to provide students with an opportunity to study at an undergraduate level to fulfil the initial requirements for AFN Accreditation, to develop their knowledge of public health nutrition and to increase their skills in applying such knowledge in a healthcare setting. The programme fits well with other programmes running in the Institute and the School in the general areas of health sciences (e.g., Medical Science, Sport and Exercise Science, Biopharmaceutical Science).

Master of Science in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition
Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition (Exit)
Certificate in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition (Exit)

Sport and Exercise Nutrition is the application of scientific and nutritional principles to understand and enhance sport and exercise performance and health and well-being. The programme is designed to provide students with a sound grounding in the scientific method in the context of sport and exercise nutrition. Key areas of study include physiology, nutrition, and metabolism with a focus on practical application of sport and exercise nutrition. This MSc programme is a new Programme to GMIT (Galway Mayo Institute of Technology) with one cohort of graduates to date (November 2021). Within the past decade there has been a marked growth in the career opportunities available for sport and exercise nutritionists as well as an enhanced interest in nutrition to complement other existing job roles in the sport and exercise science field. Coupled with such growth has also been an increased need for appropriately qualified and accredited individuals to undertake such roles. Sport and Exercise Nutrition is one area where the work of both dietitians and nutritionists cross over. This programme fulfils the criteria for SENR accreditation.

Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Sport and Exercise Science
Bachelor of Science in Sport and Exercise Science (Exit)
Higher Certificate in Science in Physiology and Health Science (Exit)

Sport and Exercise Science is the application of scientific principles to understand and enhance sport and exercise performance and health and well-being. This new undergraduate degree programme, BSc (Hons) in Sport & Exercise Science (SES), commenced at GMIT in September 2016 and is the first of its kind in the West of Ireland. There have been only two graduating classes thus far (in 2020 and 2021). After SES commencing in 2016, several other undergraduate and postgraduate courses have also been established within the Department of Sport, Exercise and Nutrition. At an undergraduate level, there is the BSc (Hons) in Public Health Nutrition, which has several shared modules with SES. Additionally, the recently approved BSc (Hons) in Sports Coaching will have significant cross-over and shared components with SES. At a postgraduate level, there are currently three courses offered, with a fourth to commence shortly, having completed both internal and external validation. Each of these new programmes of study attract graduates from SES, in addition to students from other backgrounds.

Certificate in Food Entrepreneurship and Innovation

GMIT developed this experiential learning course to encourage learners to cultivate and develop their own food product/business thus growing new entrepreneurs in the Agri-Food sector. The course is aimed at those involved in the Agri-Food sector including local/regional food producers, the wider agricultural community, rural farmers, and food entrepreneurs, where entrepreneurial training has not typically, been prioritised. The objective of the course is to provide those involved in the sector with the knowledge and work-based skills required to foster and develop their food ideas into successful businesses, encouraging participants to consider food entrepreneurship as a viable alternative to employment. The course was developed and is delivered by a combination of qualified staff in Food Science and Nutrition together with a panel of food entrepreneurs, and promotes peer led learning. The industry leaders provide mentoring and support to participants throughout the course. In 2020 the course was refined to meet the growing training needs of food producers as they deal with the impact of Covid19 on the food sector. To survive in the current climate, many food producers need to upskill/reskill in areas such as digital marketing, online brand promotion, developing innovative business models that will ensure business development and creative thinking. The course provides them with the necessary skills to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic

4   General Findings of the External Peer Review Group

Having considered the documentation provided and discussed it with the Programme Board, the External Peer Review Group recommends the following:

Accredited until the next programmatic review	
Accredited until the next programmatic review subject to conditions and/or recommendations[1]	X
Re-design and re-submit to the same External Peer Review Group after additional developmental work	
Not Accredited	

5   Programme-Level Findings Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Public Health Nutrition and Embedded Awards

Consideration for the panel	Overall finding: Yes/No/Partially
Is there an ongoing need for the programme and has evidence been provided to support it?	Yes
Is the level and type of the award appropriate?	Yes
Are the entry requirements for the proposed programme clear and appropriate?	Yes

[1] **Note:**
Approval is conditional on the submission of a revised programme document that takes account of the conditions and recommendations outlined in the report and a response document describing the actions to address the conditions and recommendations made by the External Peer Review Group (EPRG). In this report, the term 'condition' is used to indicate an action or amendment which in the view of the EPRG must be undertaken prior to the commencement of the next delivery of the programme. Conditions are mandatory if the programme is to be approved. The term 'recommendation' indicates an item to which the Programme Board should give serious consideration for implementation at an early stage, and which should be the subject of on-going monitoring.

Is there a relationship between this programme and further education?	Yes
Are the access, transfer and progression procedures appropriate?	Yes
Does the programme comply with the Institute norms for retention, both in first year and subsequent years? Where not, does the Programme Board proactively take appropriate measures to optimise student engagement and retention?	Yes
Does the programme meet the required standards for programmes at its NFQ level (i.e., conform to GMIT Award Standards[2])? For Parent Award? For Embedded Award(s) (if applicable)? For Exit Award (if applicable)? For Minor Award (if applicable)?	Yes
Is the programme structure logical, well designed, and can the stated programme intended learning outcomes, in terms of employment skills and career opportunities, be met by this programme?	Yes
Have appropriate learning and teaching strategies been provided for the programme that supports Student Centered Learning (SCL)?	Yes
Have appropriate programme assessment strategies been provided for the programme taking account of the student workload?	Yes
Is there evidence that learning and teaching is informed by research?	Yes
Have appropriate quality management procedures been implemented in line with GMIT's Quality Assurance Framework? (e.g., Induction, Programme Handbook, Programme Board, Student Feedback, External Examiners)	Yes
Does the proposed programme demonstrate an international dimension? (e.g., content, mobility, collaboration)	Yes
Does the programme encompass sustainable development principles and ethos?	Yes
Does the programme embed employability through the inclusion of work placements, employment preparatory module(s) and/or work-based projects?	Yes
Is there evidence of strategies to promote diversity and inclusion?	Yes
Is entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation embedded in the programme?	Yes
Has the efficiency of the programme's design been considered? For example, does the programme meet the Institute norms on staff: student ratios for programmes of this type?	Yes
Is the programme externally facing? (e.g., Stakeholder engagement, guest speakers, fieldtrips, applied projects)	Yes

Space is an issue for the delivery of this programme, but the planned STEM building will provide additional facilities. Some practicals take place in a leased facility (All Core) but it is hoped in the future that these will take place on-campus.

Graduates of this programme have progressed to graduate studies in health promotion, nutrition, dietetics. There has only been one graduating class to date. ATU has a masters offering suitable for this cohort.

A wide variety of assessments are offered on the programme. There was a discussion on the inconsistency in the number of assessments across 10 and 5 ECTS modules. There was recognition that some modules may

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[2] GMIT has adopted QQI's award standards which are available HERE.

be over assessed, however it was clarified that some assessments are not lengthy. It was suggested that cross module assessments would be useful, as would a guide to provide assessment consistency accompanied by inhouse training.

Erasmus opportunities are not currently in place, but this was investigated prior to Covid. The Programme Board acknowledged that it would be a good opportunity for students, but programmes abroad need to be to ensure that the programme learning outcomes of this programme be attained.

Retention on the programme is strong generally. Student drop out is primarily in stage one and may be due to failing modules, deciding that they are not suited to the course, or that the course was not what they expected. Some students transfer to Sports Science or dietetics programmes elsewhere. Two places are offered to further education graduates annually. Students from Galway Technical Institute have a strong background for the study of this programme.

There was a discussion about how well the title of the programme aligned with the programme content. The first two years of the programme do not contain much nutrition and does not have a module titled 'Public Health Nutrition'. It was argued that certain modules contained Public Health Nutrition. The transition module Learning Innovation Skills (renamed Academic & Professional Development Skills) covers nutrition with students running a breakfast club. Students visit DEIS schools to educate students on nutrition, doing this online during Covid. All elements learned in the first two stages of the programme link into year 3 modules that are more focussed on public health nutrition. Nutrition specific examples are provided in all modules, and this is ensured by consulting with the staff that deliver modules.

It was queried whether the Fundamentals of Biomechanics module is required or suitable for students of public health nutrition. These modules allow students to transfer to the Sports and Exercise Science degree, and the study of maths in the biomechanics module is beneficial. Whilst it appeared in the document that there was a high degree of overlap between the anatomy and Physiology and the Cell Biology/Genetics modules, this does not occur in reality due to coordination by lecturers.

The portfolio element of the Personal and Professional Development for Nutritionists module was discussed. Students develop an e-portfolio, create a website to showcase their work (e.g., blog, Instagram, social media, upload of assignment). Fitness to practice needs to be mentioned in the Professional Placement module. Placements differ and can be in Ireland or abroad. For example, students have worked with nutritionists, Caroline Walker trust, Nutrition Scotland, Dawn Farm Foods, and HSE.

It was evident from discussions with the Programme Board that there is a strong emphasis on building transversal skills throughout the programme, and particularly communication skills using a range of media.

The panel met a group of students who informed the programme findings. Students discussed their reasons for choosing the programme, how well it met their expectation, employability, placement, access to software, assessments, and the student voice. The students were largely positive about the programme. The placement was viewed as useful, albeit short in duration. Students received a calendar of assessments, and although not set it stone it didn't appear to cause any issues. There was good open communication between students and staff, although there was little awareness of the Programme Board structure.

Minimal changes to the programme were proposed and these included changes to structure, module titles, assessment weightings and the addition of a new module. All changes as outlined in Appendix D were approved and the programme was accredited until the next programmatic review subject to the recommendations below.

Commendation(s):

1. The quality of the documentation, the enthusiasm of the programme team and their active engagement with the peer review panel.
2. The programme is diverse and has a wide range of assessments.
3. The alignment of the programme with accreditation standards which will enhance graduate opportunities.

Condition(s):

1. Review all failed elements, providing an appropriate justification, and amending as required.

Recommendation(s):

1. Articulate the employment and progression pathways of graduates. Consider the provision of support sessions for students about these pathways during the final year of the programme.
2. Reconsider the relevance of the Fundamentals of Biomechanics module within a Public Health Nutrition programme.
3. Consider the inclusion of a nutrition-based module in stage one.
4. Prepare a programme assessment strategy.
5. Consider how the Programme Board can ensure consistency between the assessment of modules with similar weightings, with a view to reducing student workload. The scheduling of continuous assessment should be planned to minimise overload at any given time.
6. Develop a standardised approach to assessment feedback, both in terms of timeliness and quality.
7. Consider how study abroad opportunities can be built into the programme.
8. Ensure module learning outcomes are worded appropriately for the level of the programme in all instances. Review the number of module learning outcomes, reducing and combining them where appropriate.
9. Review module reading lists ensuring that they are up to date and that relevant journal resources are included.
10. Review module titles and content to reflect the public health nutrition dimension of the programme.
11. It would be useful if the peer review panel were provided with student handbooks (e.g., research, placement) for future programmatic reviews.

Module Recommendation(s):

Module Title	Recommendation(s)
MEDI06001 2022 Human Physiology	Consider reviewing the assessment types ensuring inclusion of a variety of modes.
COMM07013 2022 Personal and Professional Development for Nutritionists	Provide further detail on the portfolio.
PLAC07017 2022 Professional Placement	Include fitness to practice in the module descriptor.
COMM08005 Health Promotion	Health promotion principles should be emphasised in the module descriptor and learning outcomes.
THES08013 2017 Research Project in Public Health Nutrition	Include ethics within the learning outcomes of the module.

For office use only (To be completed by Head of Department)	
Changes due to be implemented in:	
Changes to be implemented on phased or simultaneous basis:	
NB: If the programme changes are to be implemented simultaneously (all stages at once) then the Academic Information Systems Office must be notified immediately where modules have moved stages and an interim APS is required.	

6 Programme-Level Findings Master of Science in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition and Embedded Awards

Consideration for the panel	Overall finding: Yes/No/Partially
Is there an ongoing need for the programme and has evidence been provided to support it?	Yes
Is the level and type of the award appropriate?	Yes
Are the entry requirements for the proposed programme clear and appropriate?	Yes
Is there a relationship between this programme and further education?	N/A
Are the access, transfer and progression procedures appropriate?	Yes
Does the programme comply with the Institute norms for retention, both in first year and subsequent years? Where not, does the Programme Board proactively take appropriate measures to optimise student engagement and retention?	Yes
Does the programme meet the required standards for programmes at its NFQ level (i.e., conform to GMIT Award Standards[3])? For Parent Award? For Embedded Award(s) (if applicable)? For Exit Award (if applicable)? For Minor Award (if applicable)?	Yes
Is the programme structure logical, well designed, and can the stated programme intended learning outcomes, in terms of employment skills and career opportunities, be met by this programme?	Yes
Have appropriate learning and teaching strategies been provided for the programme that supports Student Centered Learning (SCL)?	Yes
Have appropriate programme assessment strategies been provided for the programme taking account of the student workload?	Yes
Is there evidence that learning and teaching is informed by research?	Yes
Have appropriate quality management procedures been implemented in line with GMIT's Quality Assurance Framework? (e.g., Induction, Programme Handbook, Programme Board, Student Feedback, External Examiners)	Yes
Does the proposed programme demonstrate an international dimension? (e.g., content, mobility, collaboration)	Yes
Does the programme encompass sustainable development principles and ethos?	Yes

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[3] GMIT has adopted QQI's award standards which are available HERE.

Does the programme embed employability through the inclusion of work placements, employment preparatory module(s) and/or work-based projects?	Yes
Is there evidence of strategies to promote diversity and inclusion?	Yes
Is entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation embedded in the programme?	Yes
Has the efficiency of the programme's design been considered? For example, does the programme meet the Institute norms on staff: student ratios for programmes of this type?	Yes
Is the programme externally facing? (e.g., Stakeholder engagement, guest speakers, fieldtrips, applied projects)	Yes

It was clarified that the Programme Board were seeking validation for full- and part-time delivery of the programme, as the part-time hours were not displaying on the Approved Programme Schedule. The hours for both modes of delivery are the same, but the duration of the programme differs from 1.5 years for full-time to 3 years for part-time delivery.

The Postgraduate Diploma and Certificate were not submitted for approval as entry points to help assure the viability of the programme, but this could be done through a Differential Validation in the future. This would require consideration of the appropriateness of the programme titles.

Retention is strong on the programme. There is a lot of interest in the programme, but all those who accept offers do not take up their programme place.

The Programme Board had recently received notification that accreditation by SENr had been approved. Graduates of the programme work for a range of organisations e.g., Connacht Rugby, homeless charity, wellness officer, self-employment.

The panel queried why no changes have been made based on feedback received. It was clarified that largescale changes would never be made after one round of feedback, and that it was not appropriate to make changes whilst going through professional accreditation. However, it was clarified that minor modifications are made based on experience of delivery.

An assessment schedule is developed at the commencement of the semester, and class representatives provide feedback if it needs to be amended. Lecturers do their best to provide timely feedback. There is no specific assessment strategy, but a variety of assessments are used. There are no guides in relation to assessment load, repeat assessment or group assessment. The Programme Board have discussed the number of assessment points, but many are based on developing required skills.

Students are provided with titles for research projects or can seek approval for their own. In second semester students work on their literature review and an elevator pitch in preparation for an ethics application. The following semester students gather data, analyse and write up their project before submitting their research as a journal article. Students are provided with a research handbook. The panel commented on the lack of journal reading listed in module descriptors.

The placement module was explored and it was concluded that the module constituted practice rather than placement. There are a set of outcomes students have to meet during the module as they work with local clubs and teams. Whilst there are insufficient qualified nutritionists to supervise in the workplace, two academic staff liaise with students on a weekly basis. The Programme Board felt that the risk of students operating on an unsupervised basis was mitigated by the due diligence conducted in the first semester where students learn and practice core skills.

The panel met a group of students who informed the programme findings. Students discussed their reasons for choosing the programme, how well it met their expectation, employability, placement, access to software, assessments, and the student voice. The students were largely positive about the programme. The SENr accreditation gave students confidence as to the quality of the masters. Students felt prepared for the practice element of the placement, but it could be challenging to get a placement. Students felt that assessment outlines were clear in terms of expectations, but there was a lack of coordination in relation to the CA schedule which was challenging. The videos provided to support SPSS were useful. There was a concern about the lack of feedback on assessments in a timely manner. There was good open communication between students and staff, although there was little awareness of the Programme Board structure.

No changes were proposed for this programme (Appendix E). The programme was accredited until the next programmatic review subject to the recommendations below.

Commendation(s):
1. The commitment and enthusiasm of the programme team was evident in their engagement with the peer review panel.
2. The Programme Board have strong links with relevant external agencies.
3. There is a good balance between theory and practice and the development of student competencies within the programme.
4. Staff have created and maintain a supportive student environment.

Condition(s):
1. Revise the module descriptors to ensure that content and assessment, as implemented, is appropriately reflected in the documentation.

Recommendation(s):
1. Ensure that part-time hours are entered onto module descriptors, and they appear on the Approved Programme Schedule.
2. Develop a programme assessment strategy.
3. Consider how the programme team can schedule assessments to avoid student overload.
4. The panel noted the level of detail relating to assessment is more detailed in some module descriptors e.g., Advanced Sport and Exercise Nutrition. Consider standardising the level of detail provided across modules, ensuring that it provides appropriate clarity for students.
5. Review module reading lists ensuring that they are up to date and that relevant journal resources are included.
6. Ensure in all instances that module learning outcomes are appropriately phrased for the level of the programme.
7. Consider whether embedded awards should be validated as entry points.

Module Recommendation(s):

Module Title	Recommendation(s)
BIOL09018 Human Nutrition	Specify whether the assessment involves one or more reports and the type of report(s) involved
BIOL09014 Sport and Exercise Nutrition Research in Practice 1	Consolidate the assessments in this module, giving due consideration to student assessment workload.
BIOL09015 Advanced Sport and Exercise Nutrition	Consider whether the student assessment workload is appropriate.

BIOL09017 Research Methods	List video supports for SPSS in the module descriptor. Consider whether the article critique and literature review are both required.
BIOL09016 Sport and Exercise Nutrition Research in Practice 2	Clarify in the module descriptor how the students are assessed using a combination of reflection and evidence of meeting specified outcomes. Consider rewording text in the module descriptor to clarify that this module is practice rather than placement and provide detail of how the students are supervised.
BIOL09021 Research Project	Revise the assessment strategy to reflect the inclusion of a viva.

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Changes due to be implemented in:	
Changes to be implemented on phased or simultaneous basis:	
NB: If the programme changes are to be implemented simultaneously (all stages at once) then the Academic Information Systems Office must be notified immediately where modules have moved stages and an interim APS is required.	

7 Programme-Level Findings Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Sport and Exercise Science and Embedded Awards

Consideration for the panel	Overall finding: Yes/No/Partially
Is there an ongoing need for the programme and has evidence been provided to support it?	Yes
Is the level and type of the award appropriate?	Yes
Are the entry requirements for the proposed programme clear and appropriate?	Yes
Is there a relationship between this programme and further education?	Yes
Are the access, transfer and progression procedures appropriate?	Yes
Does the programme comply with the Institute norms for retention, both in first year and subsequent years? Where not, does the Programme Board proactively take appropriate measures to optimise student engagement and retention?	Yes
Does the programme meet the required standards for programmes at its NFQ level (i.e., conform to GMIT Award Standards[4])? For Parent Award? For Embedded Award(s) (if applicable)? For Exit Award (if applicable)? For Minor Award (if applicable)?	Yes
Is the programme structure logical, well designed, and can the stated programme intended learning outcomes, in terms of employment skills and career opportunities, be met by this programme?	Yes
Have appropriate learning and teaching strategies been provided for the programme that supports Student Centered Learning (SCL)?	Yes
Have appropriate programme assessment strategies been provided for the programme taking account of the student workload?	Yes

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[4] GMIT has adopted QQI's award standards which are available HERE.

Is there evidence that learning and teaching is informed by research?	Yes
Have appropriate quality management procedures been implemented in line with GMIT's Quality Assurance Framework? (e.g., Induction, Programme Handbook, Programme Board, Student Feedback, External Examiners)	Yes
Does the proposed programme demonstrate an international dimension? (e.g. content, mobility, collaboration)	Yes
Does the programme encompass sustainable development principles and ethos?	Yes
Does the programme embed employability through the inclusion of work placements, employment preparatory module(s) and/or work-based projects?	Yes
Is there evidence of strategies to promote diversity and inclusion?	Yes
Is entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation embedded in the programme?	Yes
Has the efficiency of the programme's design been considered? For example, does the programme meet the Institute norms on staff: student ratios for programmes of this type?	Yes
Is the programme externally facing? (e.g. Stakeholder engagement, guest speakers, fieldtrips, applied projects)	Yes

There was a discussion on the period covered by the Programmatic Review. The review was originally scheduled for 2019-20 and was delayed due to Covid. The programme was newer at that point and only the first two years were being reviewed. The panel queried the appropriateness of the decision to review only two years of the programme at this point, given that two cohorts have now completed the programme. The incomplete review resulted in incomplete data for the panel. For example, no data on graduate employability was provided, although the Programme Board verbally provided information on the destination of some graduates. Other research which would normally be expected in a programmatic review and in line with the Institute's policy was missing including stakeholder research.

The Programme Board aim to keep in touch with graduates. As the first graduating class completed their studies during Covid, many have remained on to undertake research programmes, whilst others are employed in industry in Ireland and abroad. Some graduates used the programme as a pathway to physio and P.E. Students are prepared for employment throughout the programme e.g., Academic & Professional Development module, work placement, exercise instruction included in modules. Students are challenged in year 2 to start thinking about what they want to have on their CV when they graduate and how they can fill gaps through activities that will complement their degree. As many local organisations are keen to work with students on this programme, many valuable experiential opportunities are available to students.

Placements are structured to be flexible in relation to the number and timing of hours. Some students work with sports teams in the evening, whilst others work 40 hours per week in medical companies. Whilst on placement students complete their research project. Placements must provide students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills. The programme is fortunate that there is a surplus of placement opportunities. Placements are sourced by staff and placement providers are provided with handbooks outlining the placement requirements. Students and providers are visited during the placement period and there are feedback interviews with placement providers. Placements tend to be diverse and include placements with cohorts with special needs and older people as well as working with sports partnerships and family resource centres. Placements are normally not paid. The placements are deliberately sited in stage 4 of the programme so students can easily transition into the workplace. The Programme Board are monitoring the impact of the placement, which is graded, on students' award classification, but there are no concerns arising.

Students are prepared for research commencing in stage 1 with the LIS (now renamed Academic & Professional Development) module and followed by a Research Methods module in stage 2. In stage 3 students have to submit an assignment in a journal article format, whist in the final year students have to critique articles and conduct a research project.

Lack of space and a permanent home are an ongoing issue for programmes in the Department. When originally developed the programme undertook practical work in the Galway GAA Centre of Excellence and have more recently taken a five-year lease of the All Core Facility. The programme also has use of a number of pitches in the area and are negotiating use of an indoor Astro turf facility. In the longer-term investment is required in sport and exercise facilities. Funding has been sought to develop a site GMIT owns, but this will require the finalisation of the local area plan.

Retention levels in stage one are similar to those for other science programmes. Students who have not previously studied science can encounter difficulties. Retention has been particularly challenging during the pandemic as peer support is not as strong. The primary reason given for students leaving their programme is 'Wrong programme choice', but other issues including lack of accommodation impact too. The Programme Board try to maintain contact with 'at risk' students, with lecturers regularly communicating with each other and students about attendance and engagement.

There is no Institute wide policy on assessment workload. Students are provided with an assessment matrix each semester, and it is modified to spread assessment deadlines. Rubrics are used, with some staff using them as a learning rubric and others using it to provide assessment feedback. Staff regularly engage with CPD in teaching and assessment and there is a balance of assessment modes used in the programme. The Programme Board is actively trying to reduce the volume of assessment by using integrated assessment. Staff in the School of Science have piloted using algorithms to push out early warnings to students, and this is to be rolled out to the rest of the school. A range of feedback mechanisms are used, as are approaches to group assessment. Learning outcomes are often assessed more than once, although this is less the case in newer programmes. In some instances, double marking is used, with moderation used where discrepancies arise.

The panel discussed a number of discipline specific issues including the coverage of doping within the programme. First aid was taught to students prior to covid. Injury management was covered until the programme content changed due to REPS requirements, but injury reduction is covered. The programme was designed using 10 ECTS modules to ensure capacity for detailed practicals and flexibility within them. It was pointed out that the Failed Elements in stages 2, 3 and 4 were recorded in error.

The facilities and equipment required for physiology and biomechanics are available. The ongoing risk for the programme is a dedicated space.

Although stages 3 and 4 were not formally reviewed, the Programme Board reported that it is evident that having the placement in year 4 is working well. Some review did take place with changes required for REPS approved through an internal quality assurance system.

The panel met a group of students who informed the programme findings. Students discussed their reasons for choosing the programme, how well it met their expectation, employability, placement, access to software, assessments, and the student voice. The students were largely positive about the programme. Some students chose the programme due to interest in sport whilst others used it as a pathway to study physio. The placement gave students confidence but the research project deadline four weeks after placement ended hindered ability to remain on in the placement. Generally, the completion of projects during placement was considered challenging. The duration of placement was considered short for employers to invest time into student development. Students lacked clarity on who the key academic contact was for placement, and the placement visit didn't always seem to occur although this may have been a consequence of Covid. Feedback on assessment varied in relation to timeliness and quality. There was good

open communication between students and staff, although there was little awareness of the Programme Board structure.

Minimal changes to the programme were proposed and these included changes to module titles and weightings. All changes as outlined in Appendix F were approved and the programme was accredited until the next programmatic review subject to the recommendations below.

Commendation(s):
1. There was evidence of good programme leadership and a strong team who are passionate about the programme, the students, and the Institution.
2. Placements are well organised and managed and are of good quality. This is driven by the Programme Board who source high quality placements for students. Students are given many opportunities for professional development throughout the programme.
3. Students are well supported generally and, in particular, in their transition between second and third level.
4. The use of integrated assessments across the programme is welcome.

Condition(s):
1. Amend module descriptors as follows:
   a. Clearly specify the repeat assessment mechanisms in each module descriptor.
   b. Review all failed elements, providing an appropriate justification for each, and amending as required.
   c. The module descriptors in all years need to be updated to accurately reflect what is being taught and assessed.

Recommendation(s):
1. Clarify in the placement handbook who the key contact is for students should they encounter difficulties.
2. Develop a Department Assessment Guide to ensure consistency of assessment templates, approach to assessment workload, management of group assessments and a common approach to feedback timeliness and quality. The Institution (GMIT) assessment guide may be useful in this regard.
3. Review module reading lists ensuring that they are up to date and that relevant journal resources are included.
4. The Institute should recognise the work of programme coordinators for the support they provide to students.
5. The panel are supportive of the need for investment in facilities. The Department is of sufficient scale to warrant such investment to enhance the student experience. This is critical, and plans need to be made by the Institute so that suitable facilities are in place before the end of the current leasing arrangement.
6. Student data should be rigorously collected and included in future reviews, as should graduate and industry feedback.

For office use only (To be completed by Head of Department)	
Changes due to be implemented in:	
Changes to be implemented on phased or simultaneous basis:	
NB: If the programme changes are to be implemented simultaneously (all stages at once) then the Academic Information Systems Office must be notified immediately where modules have moved stages and an interim APS is required.	

8   Programme-Level Findings Certificate in Food Entrepreneurship and Innovation

The Programme Board outlined the applied nature of the programme to the panel, and the types of enterprise developed through the programme. Products vary from vegan offerings and chocolate to beverages. Whilst numbers of students on the programme vary, the number of places funded by Springboard is met or exceeded annually.

Some students struggle with writing and constructing reports. Students are supported in this regard. Modules on the programme are integrated, and sustainability is embedded throughout the programme if not explicitly e.g., packaging, food sustainability, transport, and sourcing. The transition to online trading was challenging for food entrepreneurs during the pandemic. Funding has been made available for a new project in relation to moving businesses online.

No changes were proposed for this programme (Appendix G).   The programme was accredited until the next programmatic review subject to the recommendations below.

Commendation(s):
1.   The programme is very innovative and is making a strong contribution to the region and beyond. The European links and funding will further develop this discipline.
2.   The commitment and enthusiasm of programme team was evident in their engagement with the peer review panel.

Condition(s):
    None
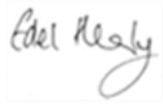
Recommendation(s):
1.   Consider how sustainability can be more explicitly embedded in the programme.

For office use only (To be completed by Head of Department)	
Changes due to be implemented in:	
Changes to be implemented on phased or simultaneous basis:	
NB: If the programme changes are to be implemented simultaneously (all stages at once) then the Academic Information Systems Office must be notified immediately where modules have moved stages and an interim APS is required.	

Validation Panel Report Approved By:

Signed:

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Dr. Edel Healy
Chairperson

Date: **22ⁿᵈ June 2022**

Appendix A - Programme Board Members

The panel met with the following staff:

Name	Position
Dr Lisa Ryan	Head of Dept. Sport Exercise & Nutrition Science
Dr Des Foley	Head of School of Science

The panel met with the following Public Health Nutrition Academic Staff

Dr Francesco Noci	Dr Evelyn Hannon	Dr Paula Conroy
Ms. Nóra Ní Fhlannagáin	Dr Karen Keane	Ms. Karen Finn
Dr Francesco Noci	Dr Anthonia O Donovan	

The panel met with the following MSc in Applied Sport & Exercise Nutrition Academic Staff

Dr Lisa Ryan	Des Foley	Paula Conroy
Mr. Brendan Allen	Ms. Maria Mc Donagh	Ms. Nóra Ní Fhlannagáin
Dr Karen Keane	Dr Paula Conroy	Mr. Ross Corbett

The panel met with the following Sports & Exercise Science Academic Staff

Dr Robert Mooney	Mr. Ed Daly	Mr. John Duggan
Dr Caoimhe Tiernan	Mr. Ross Corbett	Dr Alan Griffin
Dr Siobhan Leahy	Dr. Judith Wurmel	

The panel met with the following Certificate in Food Innovation Academic Staff

Dr Lisa Ryan	Dr Evelyn Hannon	Mr. Brendan Allen
Ms. Maria McDonagh		

Appendix B - Student Representatives

The panel met with the following student representatives:

Student Name	Programme	Stage
Ms. Kayley Barrett	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Sport and Exercise Science	4
Ms. Aimee Fox	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Sport and Exercise Science	4
Ms. Aoibhe Carabine	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Sport and Exercise Science	3
Ms. Maria McHale	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Public Health Nutrition	4
Ms. Ciara O'Rourke	Master of Science in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition	1
Ms. Máire Nixon	Master of Science in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition	1
Aidan Conneely	Master of Science in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition	1

Appendix C - Schedule of Meetings

Agenda	
Date:	Thursday May 5th, 2022
9am	Panel Meet
9.45am	Parallel A: Public Health Nutrition Programme Board
9.45am	Parallel B: Sport & Exercise Science Programme Board
11.45 am	Break
12 noon	Meet with Students
12.30pm	Food Entrepreneurship & Innovation
1pm	Lunch
2pm	MSc Applied Sport & Exercise Nutrition Programme Board
3.30pm	Break
3.45pm	Panel - Private Deliberations
4.45pm	Initial Feedback
The Agenda may be subject to slight alteration on the day.	

Appendix D - Proposed Changes for Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Public Health Nutrition and Embedded Awards

Topic	Proposed Change	Rationale
Programme Learning Outcomes		
Overall Contact Hours		
Structure or Sequencing of Modules	*Nutrition, Physical Activity & Health* Omit practical hours (2 x semester)	Work can be covered in tutorials instead
	Food Science and Technology 10 credits rather than 2 x5 credit modules.	More streamlined practical approach
	Human Physiology A 5 credit Human Physiology module has now been combined with 5 credits of anatomy to become 10 credit *Anatomy & Physiology* module	More appropriate alignment of content
Addition of New Module(s)	Biochemistry BIOL06044 Stage 2	More appropriate alignment of content
New APS Regulations		
Minimum Entry Requirements		
Changed transfer or progression routes		
Teaching & Learning Strategy		
Assessment Strategy		
Module Changes		
Stage 2		
Biomechanics and	Name change *Biomechanics*	More appropriate alignment of

anatomy	reduce credit from 15 ECTS to 10 ECTS	content
Nutrition, Physical Activity & Health	Omit practical hours (2 x semester)	Work can be covered in tutorials instead Cut down on the number of hours dedicated to this module – informed from student feedback forms
Immunology	New module number Changed the department name (as this module is solely for PHN now if approved) We are proposing to change from 70% final exam/30% CA to 60% final exam/40% CA. I think that 70% is a very high weighting for a final exam and if a student performs poorly on the day, it will have a significant impact on their overall module grade. Changed the module description slightly - removed transplantation and added in final sentence Removed transplantation from LO4. Added in LO5 Changed the assessment strategy to include the 3rd assessment (research assignment) Updated the reading list Added journals to the journal's list	It is proposed that we make a new Immunology module on module manager so that it has it has its own module code and slightly different learning outcomes to med science. The exam paper was always split with med. science as the module shared the same code (i.e., section A for med science, section B for PHN). This will cause less confusion if we keep the PHN immunology module separate
Food Science and Technology	10 credits rather than 2 x 5 credit modules.	More streamlined practical approach (once a fortnight throughout the year). Reduced assessment (Mini quizzes and practicals ongoing throughout the year) 1 project and end of year exam (40%).
Human Physiology	Name change *Anatomy & Physiology* 5 credit Human Physiology module has now been combined with 5 credits of anatomy to become 10 credit module	More appropriate alignment of content

Appendix E - Proposed Changes for Master of Science in Applied Sport and Exercise Nutrition and Embedded Awards

Topic	Proposed Change	Rationale
Programme Learning Outcomes	No change	
Overall Contact Hours	No change	
Structure or Sequencing of Modules	No change	
Addition of New Module(s)	No change	
New APS Regulations	No change	
Minimum Entry Requirements	No change	
Changed transfer or progression routes	No change	

Topic	Proposed Change	Rationale
Teaching & Learning Strategy	No change	
Assessment Strategy	No change	
Module Changes	No change	

Appendix F - Proposed Changes for Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Sport and Exercise Science and Embedded Awards

Topic	Proposed Change	Rationale
Programme Learning Outcomes		
Overall Contact Hours		
Structure or Sequencing of Modules		
Addition of New Module(s)		
New APS Regulations		
Minimum Entry Requirements		
Changed transfer or progression routes		
Teaching & Learning Strategy		
Assessment Strategy		
Module Changes		
Stage 1		
Learning & Innovation Skills	Name change: Academic & Professional Skills	institute wide change
Fundamentals of Biomechanics and Anatomy	Name change: The Fundamentals of Biomechanics Change from 15 ECTS to 10 ECTS	Better balance of modules
Human Physiology	Name change: Human Physiology and Anatomy Change from 5 ECTS to 10 ECTS	Better balance of modules
Stage 2		
Exercise Instruction	Change in module learning outcomes, delivery and assessment methods	To align with Register of Exercise Professionals Ireland

Appendix G - Proposed Changes for Certificate in Food Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Topic	Proposed Change	Rationale
Programme Learning Outcomes	n/a	
Overall Contact Hours	n/a	
Structure or Sequencing of Modules	n/a	
Addition of New Module(s)	n/a	
New APS Regulations	n/a	
Minimum Entry Requirements	n/a	
Changed transfer or progression routes	n/a	

Teaching & Learning Strategy	n/a	
Assessment Strategy	n/a	
Module Changes	n/a	